

Daniel BALLIN, *et al.*
Serial No. 10/550,205
January 12, 2009

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner is thanked for the Notice of allowance dated October 10, 2008. However, because (a) some desired claim amendments were inadvertently omitted in earlier submissions, and (b) some additional prior art was belatedly discovered, withdrawal from allowance has been requested with a concurrently filed RCE.

The desired claim amendments are effected above – which amended claims now better correspond to claims granted in a European counterpart application. Basis for such amendments may be found, for example, in the specification at page 16, lines 3-8; page 17, lines 31-32; page 19; page 21, lines 26-29; pages 30-36; and Figure 6.

The additional prior art attached hereto and/or cited in the attached Form PTO/SB/08a was recently discovered and/or has been cited in related co-pending application Serial No. 10/549,750 (also included on the attached Form PTO/SB/08a).

Although the recently discovered prior art has not yet been thoroughly studied, some presently available partial notes are provided below. Of course, the Examiner is requested to perform an independent, thorough consideration of all identified documents.

Benford appears to describe an overview of avatar systems for general background information.

Blumberg appears to describe animated agents and addresses building autonomous animated creatures for interactive virtual environments which are also capable of being directed in multiple ways. Blumberg also describes a layered architecture and behavioral model which incorporates explicit support for multi-level external control.

Ballin appears to describe personalizing avatars' appearance, etc., for general background information.

Cassell appears to describe autonomous non-verbal behavior as a form of communication – but does not appear to refer to a framework having nodes which propagate values in forwards and backwards directions through the framework.

Del Bimbo appears to describe how visual specification by example can be implemented using a framework which casts each individual agent into a state-oriented reactive mode, which is driven by the perception of environment stimuli corresponding to the occurrence of specific temporal evolutions of the spatial relationships in virtual environments. An interaction mode appears to be described in which internal control commands are issued to the autonomous model which basically operates as a decoder translating spatio-temporal stimuli received from the environment into internal control

commands issued to the autonomous model. The behavioral mode is completed by the definition of the XSTL assertions capturing the spatio-temporal stimuli that the agent perceives from its environment and by their association with the five control commands referenced in the autonomous model. The definition of these stimuli appears to basically depend on the type of environment where the agent will operate. For example, a stimulus causing the engagement of the brake control command could be the presence of a pedestrian standing over a point found along the advancement direction of the vehicle at a near distance and moving with any speed.

Hsu appears to describe a method that enables a user to control a free-form deformation of an object by manipulating the object directly.

Gain appears to describe directly manipulated free-form deformation for background information.

Perlin appears to describe animated agents for background information.

Scerri appears to describe a layered architecture for specification of the behavior of an artificial intelligence system which appears to describe a hierarchy of behaviors for background information.

Slater appears to describe body tracing devices, *inter alia*, which enable movements of a person's whole body and limbs to become part of the dynamic changes to objects in the VE under his or her immediate control.

Thorisson appears to describe a conversational agent which uses non-verbal communication.

Tu appears to describe animated agents for background information.

Ball (2000) appears to describe a Bayesian network which generates behavior in an animated character and infers emotional state in the user interacting with the avatar. Ball (2000) does not appear to involve any inference of state for a semi-autonomous avatar or any behavior design.

Ball (1999) appears to describe a Bayesian network which generates behavior in an animated character and infers emotional state in the user interacting with the avatar. Ball (1999) does not appear to involve any inference of state for a semi-autonomous avatar or any behavior design.

Abrilian appears to be for background information.

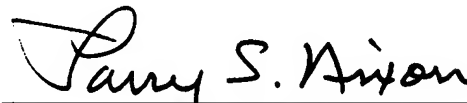
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Re-allowance of this application as now presented is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Larry S. Nixon", written over a horizontal line.

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